

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

*A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy*

---

---

December 14, 2010

---

---

U.S., China Officials Focus on Military-to-Military Relations .....	1
Trans-Pacific Partnership Talks Make Progress in New Zealand .....	1
COP-16 Renews Hope for Global Climate Treaty .....	2
HIV/AIDS and Disabilities: Making the Connection.....	3

## U.S., China Officials Focus on Military-to-Military Relations

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. and Chinese defense officials recently discussed how to develop more durable military-to-military relations, a senior U.S. defense official says.

Under Secretary of Defense Michèle Flournoy met with Chinese General Ma Xiaotian, the deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army, in Washington and discussed a range of security issues including North Korea's nuclear weapons program, maritime security, and Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

"I won't say that we agreed on every issue. Where we did differ, we had a very candid and frank and productive exchange of views," Flournoy told reporters December 10 at a Pentagon press briefing. "These kinds of talks, I believe, contribute to improving the basis for a more cooperative relationship between our two countries and our two militaries over time."

Improving U.S.-China military relations has been a significant concern of the Obama administration since earlier this year; Defense Secretary Robert Gates has repeatedly called for a resumption of consultations and visits. Gates travels to China January 10-14, 2011, at China's invitation, to begin talks and prepare for Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to Washington later in January.

Flournoy said her meeting with Ma is expected to help contribute to setting a positive tone and creating success in both of the upcoming meetings.

Flournoy and Ma also exchanged views on the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, which defines how and when the United States will employ nuclear weapons in its own defense, and the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Review. "We discussed the importance of China continuing to make progress in improving its openness and transparency in defense matters," Flournoy said.

China serves as chairman of the Six-Party Talks that work to convince North Korea to forego a nuclear weapons development program and efforts to build long-range ballistic missiles. China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and the United States comprise the Six-Party Talks.

China has also participated in the six-nation talks to convince Iran to forego its nuclear ambitions. China along with Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States is engaged in talks with Iranian officials.

## Trans-Pacific Partnership Talks Make Progress in New Zealand

Washington — Negotiations aimed at updating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement made steady progress across a range of issues during just-concluded talks in New Zealand, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

The partnership, created in 2006 by Singapore, New Zealand and Chile, aims to promote regionwide economic cooperation. The nine TPP member economies are seeking to refine the TPP to reflect 21st-century trade standards, which include ensuring worker rights and protecting the environment.

Representatives of the United States and the other TPP countries — Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam — concluded the fourth round of those negotiations in Auckland, New Zealand, December 10.

Trade is a high priority for most Asia-Pacific nations. At the annual summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in November, the 21 member economies pledged to take "concrete steps" toward the realization of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, which APEC members say will "bring about greater prosperity and well-being for all peoples in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond."

The White House has described the TPP as "the most advanced pathway to Asia-Pacific regional economic integration."

### PROGRESS IN NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, the TPP countries made solid progress in further framing "the new horizontal, cross-cutting issues that will be at the center of an updated TPP Agreement," USTR said.

Those issues include promoting connectivity to deepen the links of U.S. companies to the emerging production and distribution networks in the Asia-Pacific; making the regulatory systems of TPP countries more compatible so companies can operate more seamlessly in TPP markets; and supporting development.

Noting that President Obama and the other TPP leaders instructed them to conclude the negotiations as swiftly as possible, negotiators in New Zealand pressed ahead in 24 separate negotiating groups.

On December 8, working groups addressed intellectual property rights, investment, financial services, technical barriers to trade, telecommunications, e-commerce and

labor.

In later work, the teams made progress on developing legal texts in each area to detail the rights and obligations each country will assume, covering the full scope of commercial and trade-related issues between the countries. They also finalized technical details necessary to prepare market-access offers, which countries plan to exchange in January 2011, USTR said.

#### PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

During four days of meetings, negotiating groups also heard from more than 100 representatives of business groups, nongovernmental organizations and academia in TPP countries.

Many of those private sector representatives participated in panel discussions or made presentations on issues relevant to the proposed agreement. TPP negotiators also exchanged views with representatives of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

"The ongoing engagement between the negotiators and stakeholders on key issues has informed the negotiations and provided concrete proposals on how to facilitate balanced trade and advance issues of common interest to the nine TPP countries," according to USTR.

The U. S. business community in Auckland hosted the U.S. delegation at an event to discuss the TPP. The gathering gave the negotiating team an opportunity to hear the views of U.S. companies operating in New Zealand and in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

The teams left Auckland with a full agenda of work that they agreed to complete ahead of the next round of discussions, scheduled for February 2011 in Santiago, Chile. In the meantime, USTR said, U.S. negotiators will continue to consult closely with Congress and U.S. stakeholders as they seek to craft an agreement that addresses the issues faced by U.S. businesses and workers.

#### COP-16 Renews Hope for Global Climate Treaty

By Karin Rives  
Staff Writer

Washington — The world may finally be on its way toward a legally binding treaty that includes all major greenhouse gas emitters and compensates nations most vulnerable to climate change.

Many environmental groups and governments from all corners of the world seem to concur: Agreements reached at the U.N.-led climate summit in Cancún, Mexico, set countries on a solid path toward lower emissions.

While modest in scope, the new agreements solidify measures first proposed at the 2009 Copenhagen summit. Among them is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund managed by the United Nations that will oversee the massive flow of climate assistance to developing countries.

"Cancún has done its job. The beacon of hope has been reignited and faith in the multilateral climate change process to deliver results has been restored," Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said December 11 at the conclusion of the two-week summit.

"Nations have shown they can work together under a common roof, to reach consensus on a common cause. They have shown that consensus in a transparent and inclusive process can create opportunity for all," she said as delegates to the conference erupted in applause.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton also praised the progress made during the long and often tough COP-16 negotiations, calling the outcome a "significant step forward."

"In the days and months ahead, the United States will work with our friends and partners to keep the world focused on this urgent challenge and to continue building on this progress," Clinton said.

#### CANCÚN: EMISSION TARGETS MUST BE BASED ON SCIENCE

Officially named the Cancún Agreements, the package of decisions adopted on the final day of the conference acknowledges for the first time in a U.N. document that global temperatures must not rise more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must be adequate and meet that 2-degree target, it said.

This is important because the U.N. Environment Programme concluded in a report released in Cancún that the voluntary emissions pledges made under last year's Copenhagen Accord will only get the world about 60 percent of the way toward reductions needed to stay below 2 degrees.

Scientists have warned that a temperature increase above 2 degrees will have catastrophic consequences. Rising sea levels, disruptive weather patterns and changing agricultural conditions will cause mass migration, food shortages, a rise in epidemics and a host of other challenges, they predict.

The Cancún Agreements also officially recognize the emissions reduction targets submitted so far by dozens of

countries. Governments will now be required to report their greenhouse gas inventories annually to ensure they do as they say.

Both the United States and China, the world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters, have submitted targets.

"For the first time in years," the environmental group Greenpeace reported, "governments put aside some major differences and compromised to reach a climate agreement."

#### ENVIRONMENTALISTS      APPLAUD      FOREST PROTECTION MEASURES

Efforts to halt deforestation, a key concern for climate experts, were also made in Cancún with the formal establishment of a U.N.-led scheme known as REDD+. Under REDD — short for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation — industrialized countries will channel huge sums of money to developing nations to help them protect rain forests.

Logging and destruction of trees account for about one-fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions, the UNFCCC estimates. Successful efforts to thwart deforestation would therefore have a direct impact on world temperatures.

The forest measure "did not include everything we hoped for, but provides a sound foundation for moving a credible REDD process forward and an agenda for the work ahead," said Gordon Shepherd, head of the World Wildlife Fund's Global Climate Initiative.

The next international climate meeting will be held in South Africa in November 2011.

Connie Hedegaard, the European commissioner for climate change, said she was pleased that the Cancún negotiations "helped deliver the outcome the world expected and needed," but the two weeks of negotiations also showed how slowly the world makes progress on climate change.

"Everyone needs to be aware that we still have a long and challenging journey ahead of us to reach the goal of a legally binding global climate framework," Hedegaard said.

#### **HIV/AIDS and Disabilities: Making the Connection**

By Louise Fenner  
Staff Writer

Washington — Imagine going to a clinic to be tested for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, if you are deaf and cannot read or use formal sign language. The doctor gives

a "thumbs-up" sign. Does it mean "yes, you have HIV" or "yes, you are OK"?

This happened in Mozambique, and the patient went home not knowing his HIV status, said Rosangela Berman Bieler, a Brazilian journalist who is among a growing number of health activists trying to give persons with disabilities better access to HIV/AIDS services. Her group, the Inter-American Institute on Disability and Inclusive Development (IID), works with governments in Latin America, the Caribbean and Portuguese-speaking Africa. Berman Bieler spoke December 3 at a conference chaired by Judith Heumann, the State Department's adviser on disability rights.

About 650 million people, or 10 percent of the world's population, live with disabilities. Most of these people live in developing countries. They are at risk of exposure to HIV but are often left out of prevention and treatment efforts, according to a 2004 World Bank/Yale University survey. Information may not be designed for people with hearing or sight impairments, and health clinics often are not wheelchair-accessible.

A few years ago "nobody would pay attention," said Berman Bieler, but now more governments and organizations such as the World Bank are recognizing that the issues of disabilities and HIV/AIDS intersect.

"Disability is really out there now as part of the whole discussion about HIV/AIDS," Berman Bieler told the conference. But advocacy groups need to "sit at the negotiating table and be part of the solution." The issue of disability must be part of national HIV/AIDS strategies, she said.

Agnes Atim of Uganda, director of the National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (NACWOLA), told the conference of a Ugandan woman who was HIV-positive and partially deaf and blind, who had to walk three days to the nearest health center. Health workers could not communicate with her, and the woman had to return home without medical treatment.

"We are talking about barriers and equality," Atim said. "Where is the equality?"

The World Bank/Yale survey found that people with disabilities engage in behaviors that carry a risk of HIV infection — unprotected sexual activity or intravenous drug use — at rates similar to those of the rest of the population. They are more vulnerable to violence or rape but less likely to receive treatment, even though rape can expose them to HIV/AIDS. Atim said that in Uganda many disabled women do not know their rights, and so in addition to looking at barriers to services, NACWOLA seeks justice for women who are victims of sexual

violence.

Countries that sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities — more than 145 countries have — must address discrimination, lack of accessible services, and other challenges facing disabled people.

#### DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

IIDI helped launch an AIDS prevention campaign in six Central American countries in 2009 that was supported by the World Bank and regional organizations. The campaign showed, “in a visual, public way, that people with disabilities should not be excluded from HIV prevention and care efforts,” Berman Bieler said.

Signs announced (in Spanish) that “AIDS does not discriminate. All of us have a role in prevention.” The signs included people with disabilities (a man in a wheelchair, a woman with a service dog, people using sign language). The campaign also developed posters in sign language stating how HIV is transmitted and how to use condoms. It reached blind people using radio spots and audio files on the Internet, and it created guides for health professionals on dealing with disabilities.

“For the first time on the streets in Central America, there were signs raising the issue of disability and relating it to sexuality and HIV,” Berman Bieler said. “It got a lot of attention in the media.”

“The message is exactly the same for everybody,” Berman Bieler said. “We’re just talking about putting it in a different format.” IIDI also advocates for universal design in clinics, such as ramps and railings that make health facilities accessible to everyone.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Heumann’s office is working with other parts of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development to include disabilities in discussions of HIV/AIDS and development. And at the December 3 conference, she encouraged disability advocates to press for giving disability a higher profile at the next international HIV/AIDS conference in Washington in 2012.

Atim urged advocacy groups to work together. “We’ve seen our disability movement, our women’s movement, our HIV movement all doing a great job in our own different corners,” she said. “But I think it’s high time that we came together.”

(Preceding items distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://america.gov>)